



Remarks

Prior to this Office Action, claims 1-5, 7-43 were pending in the instant Application. Of these, Examiner has restricted claims 31-33, and 41-43 as belonging to a group (Group II) which, according to the Examiner is a separate and distinct invention from the claims 1-5, and 7-30¹ (Group I). Examiner classified the Group II claims under class 705, subclass 1. Examiner further has classified claims 34-36 as belonging to a different group (Group III), and which was classified under class 705, subclass 26. Finally, Examiner has classified claims 37-40 as belonging to a fourth group (Group IV), and which claims are classified under class 705, subclass 44.

In view of the requirement in M.P.E.P. §708.02 ¶ VII (B), Applicants elect Group I without traverse for further prosecution on the merits. Accordingly, Applicants hereby cancel claims 31-43 without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute these restricted claims in a divisional, a continuation, or a continuation-in-part application at a later date as the law permits.

As a result of the Applicants' election, claims 1-5, and 7-30 remain pending in the instant application. In view of the Applicants' arguments submitted in response to an earlier Office Action dated August 18, 2000, all the elected claims are believed to be in a condition for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,


(44,602)

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¹ Examiner mentioned that Group I included "claims 1-5 and 7-26" in his Office Action, leaving claims 27-30 ungrouped. Applicants believe this was a mere oversight, and that the intended grouping for Group I included claims 27-30. Examiner is respectfully requested to review and correct any misunderstanding on the part of the Applicants on this matter.